



Iowa Communications Network
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Keep up-to-date
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State Technology Directors Gather for 2015 Midwest Region Seminar in Des Moines

The National Association of State Technology Directors (NASTD), which represents information technology professionals from the 50 states, through four regions, and the private sector, held their 2015 Midwest Region Seminar at the Embassy Suites Downtown in Des Moines on April 13-16.

Midwest region state members discussed information technology projects and plans for their respective states. Corporate affiliate members also contributed on presentations and panel discussions. States represented included Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

"NASTD has existed for over 40 years. If you look at the pace of the technology change... it is phenomenal," said Robert von Wolfradt, State of Iowa's Chief Information Officer. "It is important that state technology leaders learn from each other through NASTD, because people make the difference," Wolfradt added.



This year's seminar featured presentations on security, communications services, and cloud computing. There was a panel discussion on PSAPs (public safety answering point) and FirstNet (the federal initiative creating a nationwide wireless network

dedicated to first responders/public safety) which provided perspectives from the local, State, and National levels with: Judy Flores, Administrative Supervisor for Black Hawk County and Ric Lumbard, Executive Director of the ICN. In August of 2009 Black Hawk County became the first PSAP in the nation to successfully implement three-digit, 9-1-1 text messaging capability. ICN also presented the State of Iowa report and a presentation on "Solutions to Increased Remote Broadband Demand."



Vicki Wallis (ICN) presents the State report. Wallis is the current NASTD Midwest Region Vice President.

Regional seminars focused on active exchange of information among the regional state members on issues, best

practices, and day-to-day operations. These productive meetings offer learning and networking opportunities for all attendees. A distinctive feature of regional seminars is the state reporting sessions. During the sessions, each state provides an overview of key IT project initiatives, along with a summary of current and future IT procurements.



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First Statewide Discussion of Broadband Impact on Education Brings Issues to Light

Representatives of Iowa's educators met to discuss challenges they face in implementing broadband statewide to support 21st century education. This first panel discussion was broadcast statewide and open to public questions from all Iowans about broadband and education.



L-R: Mark White, Galen Howsare, John Carver, Brad Buck, Ric Lumbard, Moderator Matt Patane

While the panelists complimented the rate Iowa has been able to connect education providers, they agreed there is still much work to be done. "We are ahead of the curve. We have the greatest 1:1 deployment in the union, with the exception of Maine" complimented John Carver, Superintendent of Howard-Winneshiek Community School District, "yet, there still remain inequities and [the inequities] will remain until broadband connectivity is viewed like electricity and water. We consider these a necessity in our homes, just as broadband

and Internet connectivity is [a necessity] for our educational system to provide students with a 21st century education."

Mark White, Executive Director of the Iowa Community College Online Consortium also agrees that additional growth is necessary to keep up with current demands. "The growth of online education only occurred because Internet bandwidth increased. We've now hit this magical point in education where the technology can really have a profound impact on the learning that is going on. But there are things that need to move forward to be able to better educate and provide those educational opportunities online for all citizens."

Panelists included:

- Brad Buck, Director, Iowa Department of Education
- John Carver, Superintendent, Howard-Winneshiek Community School District
- Galen Howsare, Deputy Executive Director, Iowa Association of School Boards
- Ric Lumbard, Executive Director, Iowa Communications Network
- Mark White, Director, Iowa Community College Online Consortium

Broadband Matters, an initiative of ICN, is dedicated to providing awareness of the critical need to connect every student with high-speed Internet access. Broadband creates a culture in which learning becomes more interactive in and outside of the classroom, allowing for a more positive collaborative learning experience.

Back to the Basics: Advertised versus Real Speed

Advertised speeds are rarely, if ever, possible to achieve. For downloading, rates vary depending on how far a home connection is from the service provider, how many active users are on the network and other factors. Providers can't predict exact speeds for a location, therefore speeds are often advertised in a range. Some reasons why a person might not receive the advertised transfer rate include:

- Time of day they access the network; during peak time, the network can only handle a certain amount of data
- Distance they are from the provider equipment—in most cases, the closer to the provider equipment the

faster the data will transfer

- Type of broadband connection
- Equipment or programs installed (i.e., firewalls, wireless adapters, outdated computer technologies)

Running a speed test and contacting the service provider can help a user receive the service being paid for.

To run a speed test, visit Connect Iowa at <http://www.connectiowa.org/>.

Source: Wisconsin's Broadband Reference Guide, January 2014



How Broadband is Used at Sidney and South Page Community School Districts

Students at Sidney CSD and South Page CSD are utilizing all the benefits that they can with their schools' connection to broadband. Both of these school districts are participating in the 'Corner Conference,' which has a mission to share courses and staff through 1 to 1 implementation and IP videoconferencing. Interest in 1 to 1 computing is on the rise because of its potential to improve access to online curricula, collaboration on school projects, and communication between teachers and students.

The Corner Conference has a total of about 2,200 students from seven (7) high schools [East Mills, Fremont-Mills, Sidney, Nishnabotna, Essex, South Page, and Stanton], and gives the opportunity for neighboring school districts to share staff resources, such as Spanish, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Calculus teachers. Each instructor has a creative way to engage their students with technology. One Spanish teacher has all the class materials online, removing the paper, and fully embracing technology. Spanish students are utilizing

two broadband heavy elements: they are connecting to their teacher using video conferencing and working through their course work on their laptops.

Gregg Cruickshank, shared Superintendent, explains without high-speed Internet the participating schools wouldn't have bandwidth for two vitally important pieces that connect the collaboration: 1 to 1 computing program and IP video conferencing. These are necessary elements in our everyday curriculum and are cornerstone pieces for our schools. The startling fact is if broadband wasn't available, none of the schools would be able to provide their students with these types of courses due to class size and/or teacher experience.

When broadband is combined with digital devices and IP videoconferencing educators can provide expanded opportunities for kids, while utilizing limited resources efficiently and effectively.

Tele-psych Benefits Patients at Adair County Health System

Adair County Health System, along with the patients they treat, have seen great results with the helpful tool of tele-psych through their emergency department. The health site uses standard Polycom videoconferencing equipment called a Practitioner Cart to connect with the Mercy Help Center in Des Moines, part of Mercy Behavioral Health. The 30 Mb Ethernet service connections are made over fiber optics and use an Internet Protocol (IP video) and Ethernet network.

Prior to Adair County Health System having access to the tele-psych service through Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines, the process of coordinating mental health services for those in need took many hours and many resources. Many times the placements of patients to an inpatient setting were not clinically justified, which would create additional health care cost and have negative impact for the patients being served.

Since implementing the tele-psych service, Adair County Health System has seen a very different 'end to the story.' The two most significant, positive results are:

1. Decreased placement times for those patients that need inpatient services
2. Decreased numbers of patients that are being placed inpatient, but instead are being discharged home with an alternative plan, such as day treatment or outpatient counseling.

The first broadband success story is related to a decreased inpatient placement time for a middle age man who was presented to the emergency department (ED) with a history of depression and suicide ideations. With the combined effort of the ED staff and the tele-psych assessment/recommendations from a mental health professional (via video conferencing), the hospital was able to find an inpatient bed within 2 hours, which is a great improvement from the average 6-12 hours it would have taken in the past.

The second broadband success story related to the decreased numbers of patients being placed inpatient but instead are being discharged home with an alternative plan of day treatment or outpatient counseling. There was a young girl who presented to the ED with a history of mental illness and anxiety. Through the tele-psych evaluation, the mental health professional (via video conferencing) was quick to recommend medication adjustments and outpatient counseling, which could be ordered by the doctor in charge. This patient was able to be discharged home with her parents that day with a positive outlook on life and a regained sense of control. The outcome would not have been so great without the opportunity to utilize tele-psych.

Adair County Health System staff is very thankful to have the professional advice and an instant broadband connection from mental health experts whenever they need it.



Employee Spotlight Christina Ocheltree

Christina Ocheltree is an Accounting Technician 2, starting with the ICN in January 2014. Previously she worked for three large banks and processed payroll for ABM Janitorial in Omaha. A unique work experience when she was 14 was in the education office on R.A.F. (Royal Air Force) base in Upper Heyford, England for a summer hire project.

Christina is responsible for the posting and closing of all work orders, audits tech labor and assures that all vendor invoicing has been applied for billing. She enjoys having a variety of duties and her coworkers.

Having been born in New Mexico, her favorite food is Southwest Mexican, but the only good place to get it is

down south (New Mexico or Texas). Italian and Chinese tie for a close second.

Christina enjoys her garden: veggies and a fruit orchard. Her family has chickens for meat and next year will add egg layers. They are brand new parents of 10,000 Italian honey bees, and she wants to learn how to make candles from their wax.

Christina's family enjoys bowling, swimming, hiking & cooking together. Her daughter Bree and son Jake are highly involved in sports. Zanderman (Alexander, her eldest) is less of a sports enthusiast unless it involves Husker football. He was born in Nebraska and came home in a Husker onesie.

Long term, Christina wants to become a self-sustainable farmer and supply her local pantry with food. She wants to retire from the ICN when she is 70. "I firmly believe the more active you are in your later years the healthier you will be."

PBS LearningMedia Online Curriculum through Iowa Public Television

ICN is partnering with IPTV to bring you PBS LearningMedia (<http://iptv.pbslearningmedia.org/>), offering enhanced educational opportunities for educators and students in Iowa. Sign up for a [FREE account](#) and start using PBS LearningMedia today!

American Experience: Last Days in Vietnam

Audience: **Grades 9-12**

Gain insights into the American evacuation of Saigon and the Vietnamese refugee experience through some moving personal accounts of bravery and perseverance in this collection of media resources from American Experience.

[Learn More...](#)

No Nonsense Grammar

Audience: **Grades 1-7**

Explore a range of commonly taught grammar principles for elementary and middle schoolers with these short, fun videos and activities. From the difference between dependent and independent clauses to the correct usage of semicolons, let these resources guide you through the intricacies (and perils!) of everyday grammar.

[Learn More...](#)

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